

Neighborhood Advisory Committee 2015 Annual Report

2015 NAC serving members: DeWayne Barton, Greta Bush**, Saul Chase*, Alan Escovitz, Joe Fioccola, Teddy Jordon, Spencer Hardaway, Phillip Lenowitz**, Barber Melton, Elaine Poovey and Bob Roepnack*. (*Jan-Jun **Jul-Dec)

2015 Activity: In 2015, in addition to monthly meetings, the committee held two area meetings, two workshops and a planning retreat. The committee members also attended about a hundred different community and neighborhood meetings and about 50 neighborhoods participated in our workshops. Members also assisted testing for the Simplicity website update and provided Neighborhood Profiles this year on the City's web page for the following neighborhoods: Albemarle Park, Burton Street, Charlotte St, CAN, DARN, Enka Village, EWANA, Falconhurst, Grove @ Appledorn, Hall Fletcher, Haw Creek, Kenilworth, Montford, Malvern Hills, Parkway Forest and Wilshire Park.

Report from the Neighborhoods:

March 15 Festival of Neighborhoods Workshops: Six workshops were offered: 1) Development and sustenance of a Neighborhood Newsletter; 2) The Circle Forward Governance Program; 3) Fundraising for Neighborhoods; 4) Preventing Crime in Your Neighborhood; 5) Creating a Vision for Your Neighborhood ; and 6) Citizens Police Advisory Council.

May 18 East Area Meeting: The need for a library/community center; renaming US70 were the main issues raised. Neighborhoods with dangerous roads, such as Haw Creek, expressed desire for sidewalks.

June 26 Planning Retreat: Revised and developed strategies and action steps for achievement of the goals. Report at City Council Meetings (establishing a more formal structure and process for communicating.) NAC committed to collaborate with the City in the development of the Citizens Academy and Neighborhood Plan on a Page/Comprehensive Plan initiatives. As a result, due to resource constraints in both time and money (NAC has no available funding), the Festival of Neighborhoods event is not planned for 2016. Next spring an application process would begin to identify an Outstanding Leader in neighborhoods to be recognized by City Council. Some activities will raise profile of NAC in the community and publicize who we are and what we do.

September 28 South Area Meeting: Record turnout for area meetings: 65 participants. Need for a Community Center and some interest in district representation.

November 7 Neighborhood Plan Workshop: Representatives from 35 neighborhoods were introduced to new Planning Director Todd Okolichany and the upcoming Comprehensive Plan, as well as existing neighborhood plans. Several neighborhood groups expressed enthusiasm about creating their own 'Plan on a Page' and having the opportunity to participate in the planning process and have their concerns heard.

January 2015 Recommendations:

1. Include Neighborhoods in the Asheville City Council's Strategic Plan.
2. Assure neighborhoods understand how the City's resources are allocated in a fair, open, transparent and accountable way.
3. Engage and gain the trust of the African American community by positive interactions with the members of the Asheville City Council, the Asheville Police and City Planning Department.
4. Increase funding to neighborhood infrastructure so that it has an impact on quality of life and safety such as sidewalk construction, traffic calming, street sweeping and leaf pick up.

Report from the Committee: While no action taken yet on Item 1, some efforts are in the works for Item 2 and have been made by Chief Hooper on Item 3. For Item 4 there was new sidewalk allocation and construction of sidewalks on Hendersonville Road and New Leicester Highway also a doubling of the street resurfacing and increased street sweeping in Downtown. Some fourteen traffic calming plans are backlogged but are funded and will be completed next summer.

Neighborhood Advisory Committee Goals for 2015-2016

Vision: A city embracing the community of its neighborhoods

Mission: Communicate and advise the City Council on issues affecting neighborhoods

Goals:

1. Facilitate communication and enhance collaboration between neighborhoods, City staff, boards, commissions and City Council.

Action Plan:

- Hold a public meeting in each of the five geographic areas to identify issues affecting residents, receive neighborhood feedback, connect City staff with neighborhood organizations, and inform neighborhoods of developments in their area.
 - Foster communication and strengthen relationship between the City and neighborhoods by having NAC members serve as a liaison on some City boards and commissions
 - Support and attend some neighborhood and City-sponsored meetings.
 - Assist in development of the neighborhood portal on the City's website.
2. Submit timely reports and recommend strategies to improve Asheville's neighborhoods.

Action Plan:

- Present an annual "Report from the Neighborhoods" to City Council by the end of January, 2016.
 - Submit timely reports and advice to City Council and staff on issues affecting neighborhoods.
3. Strengthen neighborhood organizational development.

Action Plan:

- Support leadership and neighborhood organizational development.
 - Support neighborhood advocates.
 - Assist development of Citizens' Academy.
4. Promote and celebrate neighborhoods.

Action Plan:

- Profile neighborhoods on the City of Asheville website.
- Recognize successes in neighborhoods.

Adopted: August 24, 2015

Recommendations to Asheville City Council for 2016:

1. The committee requests a budget for conducting its mission.
2. Include Neighborhoods in the City Council Strategic Plan.
3. Formalize the process for the adoption of neighborhood plans.